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ABSTRACT

In order to assess the services of the International Students Program (ISP), the College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita (California) surveyed its international student population. The survey instrument included Likert-scale items as well as open-ended questions. Questionnaires were mailed to the homes of 130 ISP students, and 37 surveys were returned for a response rate of 28.5 percent. Findings included: (1) respondents were most positive with respect to the benefits of personal counseling (82%) and academic counseling (79%) provided by the ISP; (2) respondents rated the general services of ISP highly (78%) and stated that they were generally satisfied with the college (72%); (3) respondents felt most negative about housing assistance services and personal development courses; and (4) respondents felt transportation services were less than satisfactory and that ISP needed to do more to support their integration into American society. Based on the results of this survey, it is recommended that ISP increase socialization and networking activities. Contains the survey instrument, response rates for closed-ended questions, and responses to open-ended questions. (LD)

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COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

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Office of Institutional Development and Technology

International Students Program Student Questionnaire Fall 2000

Report # 101

Barry C. Gribbons, Ph.D.
P. Scott Dixon, M.A.

January 2001

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International Students Program Student Questionnaire, Fall 2000

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International Students Program Student Questionnaire, Fall 2000

Introduction

The International Students Program (ISP), with assistance from the Office of Institutional Development and Technology (IDT), developed and conducted a survey of currently enrolled international students to gather information on their opinions, perceptions and experience with the programs provided by the ISP office. The results of this survey are intended to be used by the International Students Program as they engage in a self-evaluation process.

Methods

The questionnaire was developed by the International Students Program and the Office of Institutional Development that contained both Likert-type (closed-ended) and open-ended questions. There were five response alternatives for the Likert-type questions: 'Strongly Disagree', 'Disagree', 'Neutral', 'Agree', 'Strongly Agree', and 'Did not use' (see Appendix A for a copy of the Survey and cover letter).

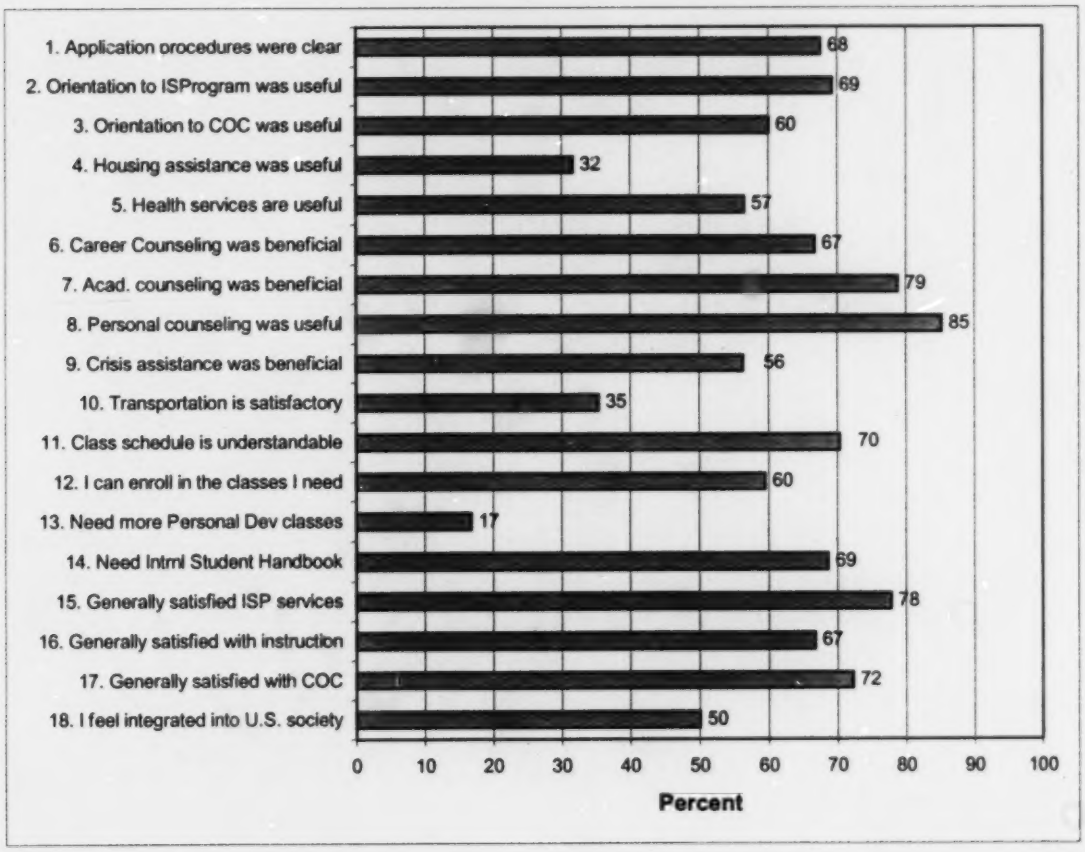
Questionnaires were mailed to all 130 ISP students, along with a stamped addressed envelope. Students were asked to return the surveys to the Office of Institutional Development and Technology. Additional questionnaires were made available for pick up at the International Students Program Office. A reminder letter initiated by the director of ISP was mailed to all ISP students.

Thirty-seven questionnaires were returned by December 15, resulting in a response rate of 28.5 percent. The office of institutional development tabulated the results and computed the descriptive statistics contained in this report.

Major Findings of Likert-type Questions

Figure 1 contains a bar chart of the percentage of students who used the services and rated them with either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' responses (see Appendix B for a frequency distribution of responses to individual questions).

Figure 1: Agree/Strongly Agree



As is evident from the figure, students indicated a high degree of satisfaction for most of the items. Three items dropped below 50 percent, whereas 12 items were at or above 60 percent, and 5 items at or above 70 percent.

The statements with the most positive responses were the following:

#8-*Personal counseling was beneficial.* (82.5%);

#7-*Academic counseling was beneficial.* (78.8%);

#15-*I am generally satisfied with the services provided by ISP.* (77.8%); and

#17-*I am generally satisfied with College of the Canyons.* (72.2%).

The statements with the fewest positive responses were the following:

#18-*I feel well integrated into American society.* (50.0%);

#10-*Transportation in the area is satisfactory.* (35.3%);

#4-*Housing assistance was useful.* (31.6%); and

#13-*More Personal Development classes are needed.* (16.7%).

Major Findings of Open-ended Questions

In addition to the Likert-type items, the survey provided space for respondents to record their answers to several open-ended questions (see Appendix C for a verbatim transcription of responses). In general, the written responses supported the Likert-type questions. The following is a summary of those responses.

19. In what ways has the Office of International Students or other parts of College of the Canyons been useful?

Respondents expressed gratitude for the friendly, ongoing support of the ISP. In addition, respondents felt that the TLC, the library, and counseling were helpful. However, several indicated dissatisfaction with housing and the lack of ongoing assistance of ISP after initial contact.

20. How can the Office of International Students or other parts of College of the Canyons make the experience of international students more satisfying?

Overall, the comments were favorable toward ISP and the college. Some suggestions included more assistance in socialization to the American culture and other students, including more opportunities to interact with American students, more parties, field trips, and potluck meals in which students can share their cultural traits. In addition, respondents requested better assistance with housing and transportation, more parking, and increased counselors on staff.

21. Do you have any other recommendations or advice for us?

Once again, the comments were favorable. Some suggestions included performing a similar survey each semester, increasing cultural events, and improving housing assistance.

Conclusions

Overall, the international students who responded to the survey were satisfied with the services offered by ISP and COC as a whole. Seventy-eight percent were generally satisfied with ISP services, and 72 percent were generally satisfied with COC. However, satisfaction was lower for Personal Development classes, housing assistance, transportation and activities supporting integration into American society. These findings were supported by respondents' comments, as well.

In responding to this feedback, an increase in resources might be beneficial in the areas of activities for socialization, networking, and integration, as well as ongoing support after initial enrollment in the program and college. In addition, a survey of this type may be useful on an annual or semi-annual basis.

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

November 17, 2000

Dear Student:

College of the Canyons' Office of International Students Program (ISP) is interested in hearing your opinions about your experiences at College of the Canyons and your experience with programs provided by the ISP office. To assist the International Students Program office in gathering this information we have developed the survey that has been included it in this envelope. While you are not required to complete this survey, we would greatly appreciate any feedback that you are willing to share with us to help us improve the quality of services offered to you. You are not expected to sign your name or identify yourself in any way on the survey. Please note that completing the survey will not affect the services that you are eligible to receive in any way.

Once you have completed the survey (front and back), please return it in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope to the Office of Institutional Development by December 6, 2000. Returning the survey by mail directly to the Office of Institutional Development will help us protect your confidentiality; however, if you prefer, you may leave the survey at the International Students Program office.

Thank you for your assistance!

Sincerely,

Barry Gribbons, Ph.D.
Executive Dean
Institutional Development and Technology

Bruce Pelkey, Ed.D.
Director
International Students Program

International Students Program Questionnaire

For the following areas please indicate the degree to which you agree with the statements. If you have not received the specific service, please mark "Did not use."

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did not use
1. Application procedures were clear.						
2. Orientation to the International Students Program was useful.						
3. Orientation to College of the Canyons was useful.						
4. Housing assistance was useful.						
5. Health services are useful.						
6. Career counseling was beneficial.						
7. Academic counseling was beneficial.						
8. Personal counseling was beneficial.						
9. Crisis assistance was beneficial.						
10. Transportation in the area is satisfactory.						
11. Class schedule is clearly written and easy to understand.						
12. I am able to enroll in the classes I need.						
13. More Personal Development classes are needed.						
14. An International Student Handbook is needed.						
15. I am generally satisfied with the services provided by ISP.						
16. I am generally satisfied with the quality of instruction.						
17. I am generally satisfied with College of the Canyons.						
18. I feel well integrated into American society.						

International Students Program Questionnaire (continued)

19. In what ways has the Office of International Students or other parts of College of the Canyons been useful?

20. How can the Office of International Students or other parts of College of the Canyons make the experience of international students more satisfying?

21. Do you have any other recommendations or advice for us?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

Please seal the completed survey in the post-paid envelope provided and either drop it in the mail or return it to the ISP office.

11/2000

Appendix B: Questionnaire with Summary Statistics

International Students Program Questionnaire

For the following areas, please indicate the degree to which you agree with the statements. If you have not received the specific service, please mark "Did not use."

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did not use / No Response
1. Application procedures were clear.	0	1	10	17	6	2
2. Orientation to the International Students Program was useful.	0	2	5	12	6	11
3. Orientation to College of the Canyons was useful.	1	2	5	9	3	17
4. Housing assistance was useful.	4	5	4	4	2	18
5. Health services are useful.	0	3	7	7	6	14
6. Career counseling was beneficial.	2	2	4	7	9	13
7. Academic counseling was beneficial.	1	2	4	17	9	4
8. Personal counseling was beneficial.	1	2	1	13	10	10
9. Crisis assistance was beneficial.	1	2	4	4	5	21
10. Transportation in the area is satisfactory.	8	6	8	9	3	3
11. The class schedule is clearly written and easy to understand.	0	1	10	16	10	0
12. I am able to enroll in the classes I need.	1	3	11	16	6	0
13. More Personal Development classes are needed.	0	8	7	5	0	7
14. An International Student Handbook is needed.	0	2	9	8	16	2
15. I am generally satisfied with the services provided by ISP.	3	0	5	13	15	1
16. I am generally satisfied with the quality of instruction.	3	4	5	17	7	1
17. I am generally satisfied with College of the Canyons.	2	2	6	14	12	1
18. I feel well integrated into American society.	0	4	4	8	10	1

Appendix C: Responses to Open-ended Questions

Q-19: In what ways has the Office of International Students or other parts of College of the Canyons been useful?

Resp. #	Comments:
1	At the beginning, on my first day at COC, the ISP office helped me to do my placement test and they accompanied me to the Admissions Office to set up my registration and everything. The TLC and the Library have been very useful, in order to do my homework, research papers, etc.
2	Change the director of ISP.
3	The Office of International Students was only helpful initially, but my feeling is that after you are in the program and they know they are paid up, the usefulness has ended. They make promises that they don't keep, for instance, with the housing and classes. My experience is that housing program is woefully inadequate; they put you with families that are ill equipped to help with your needs, or put you somewhere that has not been thoroughly researched and you are left to fend for yourself. They have not been helpful in setting up a course selection that fits my needs, in fact, they attempted to enroll me in classes that were not at all helpful to my academic needs here in this country. I was also informed my first semester that I had no rights as do other students here at the college, such as (rights) to drop, or withdraw from classes – as I would be under penalty. My feeling is that the ISP also maintains the attitude that if you don't absolutely adhere to their rule that you will be denied I-20 form, and would be sent back home. They also deny you the information of recourse legally or otherwise. They additionally are unwilling to give helpful information on how to find or access services in the community that are necessary for survival. I felt that they would restrict this kind of knowledge so that you are dependent on the program for all your needs, thus having direct control. I felt that I was promised that I would receive many things that I feel were not delivered once I arrived. I don't feel that the program was truly represented to me in my country. My feeling about the rest of the College of the Canyons departments is that they have proved very useful and helpful, Admissions and Records, the TLC, Library Resources, Student Services, and pretty much everywhere else on campus. I have found that I can get my questions answered, and any information about programs and policies here at the college in these places.
6	Whenever I have trouble about class I have counseling easily.
7	Career Center
8	(ISP) You know whereto go when some thing happens, or if you have any questions.
9	I can't say anything.
10	More candy in ISP office. We need more housing information. Thanksgiving food is not good!! I wanted to eat the whole chicken! ISCS [sic] should be more kind.
13	ISP is useful because without this program, I don't think all the process that we must go through such as VISA matters, housing, etc., would go as smooth[ly] as it is now.
14	Directing where we get help. Other directions are clear.
15	We need more parking place[s] and light for the street.
19	They have helped me to register for the classes and also they have been very helpful and very positive about the classes. The school has helped me to decide what I want to do with my future.
21	I enjoy the gathering of international students for activities, allowing them to intervene with other students who are experiencing American lifestyle.
22	If we need help, we can go to ISP office immediately and they will help us to solve the problem.
23	They are always accessible when you need them.
24	It is nice that you guys have many ___?_____ for students to make a fellowship.

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	Appendix II: Question 19 responses (cont.):
25	It is useful to show that College of the Canyons has an International Student Program. It also has been useful to connect us with other international students though activities, but we could have a couple more activities so that we can mix and mingle. [Employee Name] and [Employee Name] are wonderful. [Employee Name] is awesome, too. [Employee Name] was very nice, but [Employee Name] is more competent.
26	Well, ISP has been a big help for [international students] because some of the countries that they've been or came from don't have the "programs" that you have. And also College of the Canyons is a very nice city college. It really helps a students that is not aware of a certain thing and let[s them] be known of it.
27	The International office has been extremely helpful in terms of personal counseling. I now have a clear understanding of transfer requirements. Also, the counselors were very helpful by suggesting having my transcripts read so that I don't take courses that I've already completed.
28	There are counselors, so we can ask them a lot of things.
30	Counseling is useful.
33	The Office of International Students has been useful always when I needed information [or] help [with] problems. They are extremely helpful, cheerful, friendly people working there. I have been using TLC lab many times [as well as the] Career Center, Discover, Library, & cafeteria. I'm very thankful to ISP counselor [Employee Name] who helped me a lot to make plans for future.
34	ISP office have kind and nice staffs, so I'm helping them. And Newsletter to International Students is very useful.
35	ISP office answer to my questions with politeness. TLC lab, Transfer Center, Counseling Center, Career Center are very useful to study, look for major and so on. And they are all free.
36	It has nice tutors, counselors.
37	[ISP] has been very useful in terms of social support, caring and ready to give assistance needed by us. Counseling needs are also met by providing guidance on course selections and focusing on achieving our goals.

Appendix II (cont.):

Q-20: How can the Office of International Students or other parts of College of the Canyons make the experience of international students more satisfying?

Resp. #	Comments:
1	The ISP office should give more attention to the international students, especially to those who are alone in the United States. The ISP office should treat them as their children in a family. We come to a new country, new people, new __?__, new language…; we need information about how life works here because it is totally different from our countries most of the time. We need support from the only place we can get it: the ISP Office. Sometimes I think that they only want our money…
2	Change the director of ISP.
3	My overall opinion considering the College of the Canyons is that I have had a good experience here. I enjoy attending classes, the teachers have been very nice, and my only complaint being that International Students Office has been overly businesslike, and that they shock newly arriving foreign students with their attitudes and the workings of that office.
4	I want you to let us have more situations to communicate with American students.
6	I had some party with other international students. It's good for me to make friends.
7	To go to LA or any amusement parks
8	Try to arrange activities with American students…so we can practice our English at the same time as we "adjust" to the American society.
9	Give us social secu… (I don't know spell.)
10	I don't know. Please sell something in this ISP office: 1) Stamps 2) The old stuff.
12	The office need to care student individually.
13	ESL classes should be offered in the morning. If [held] at night, international students would have to take a risk of danger since most of us don't drive and have to walk a long way from a bus stop. It would be nice if College of the Canyons has its own housing department for international students, especially for new-comers.
14	Make parking easier, provide transport service on campus and parking lot.
16	I think ISP needs one more counselor in the beginning of the semester, because many student(s) come to this college as freshman and the ISP office gets busy. Students should have proper counseling, especially at the first time. I want to have more cultural events, because I want to know about the culture of each country. I need the opportunity to talk with someone who came from all over the world.
18	More activities for students.
19	I don't think that's possible. They are doing a very good job.
21	Showing international students possible opportunities in the job experience industry.
22	I think they need to show the international students about he college area and facilities. Since College of the Canyons is a strange place for us, they need to create some activities to us.
23	Try to promote intercultural activities, where American, Asian & Latino students can take part, not only ISP students.
24	The improvement of IS office is that you guys should give more opportunit[ies] for IS to get to know with American students. Why don't you guys _____ people to get to know with each other? In order to satisfy IS's experience at College of the Canyons is that you guys should help and meet each IS's needs.

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	Appendix II: Question 20 responses (cont.):
25	Let's have more activities where we can mix and mingle with American students. Let's invite the students from the Master's College back. Let's have a party with a dance where we invite the Masters and Americans.
26	Of course classes are very satisfying. So far, the way of teaching is very understandable and it's comfortable. Some American students are really friendly and entertaining, accept and welcome us. COC [is] a very nice place.
27	I think they do a terrific job, but I also believe that their demands from students require more than 2 counselors.
31	Learning more about each nationality for instance—games, and play it with different nationalities.
33	I believe we need to come together more, tell each other about culture and religion of different countries. It'll be more interesting for American students in College of the Canyons. I know that everybody are very busy, but I think it would be fun to do big potluck party in cafeteria. There students can show some traditional talents in dance, music or anything else. It would help to be distracted from taught classes.
34	I hope that ISP office [will] have more events and increase place of cultural exchange and make friends.
36	Events
37	[ISP] and the college can provide a forum or social gathering weekly international students can mix or associate more with other students. e.g. I know about a Persian student who desperately wanted an American friend about his age (21 yrs). I do know whether he found "an American friend" before he left COC.

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Appendix II (cont.):

Q-21: Do you have any other recommendations or advice for us?

Resp. #	Comments:
1	Yes. We should be provided with accurate and clear information about the educational programs and degrees [that] COC offers from the first day we attend COC classes.
2	Change the director of ISP.
3	My recommendation is that this survey be done at least once a semester. In fact, this is the first one I have been asked to participate in. My thoughts are that some one in the administration of the college should take a serious look at this program's operations. They could make the experience of the international student much more satisfying if they were to deal with the tissues I have addressed above.
6	No.
9	I wanna find a part-time job.
10	Nope. If you put me in the director position in the ISP, I can change more dramatically. I am just one student from Japan. My suggestion is it's ok at now. You had better ask New International student from next semester, because I already get used to this college.
12	I want to get a social security number, so I want you to help to get it.
14	Let students know "faces" in ISP, so they know who to talk to with specific kinds of questions.
15	For new students, have a lot of questions about DMV and buy a car, so if they can explain or have a workshop, it will help the students.
16	I want to know more clear information about on-campus job.
19	You guys are the best! ☺
21	When I worked with international students in Canada, we encouraged them to share cultural experiences with others. One way to do this is having them to share a favorite recipe from their home country to other students. This helps other students to learn and respect each other's cultural lifestyles.
22	Go ahead, you have already done well.
24	I recommend that you guys heed to set good housing condition for international students. Some students have a hard time to live with host family because of their lack of a car. It is big help for you guys to provide good family International students, so that they will feel comfortable by staying at each home. Moreover, if student lose his (or her) passport of I-20, files, etc., you guys should care of their needs more. (Concern of official work – do _____, embassy work, immigration, etc.)
25	Put people that are willing to help us in the administration. Let us register there with special help. No more ESL classes with [Employee Name]. He is a horrible teacher. All my friends and me didn't learn a lot in his classes. He has an accent too. How in the world should we learn how to speak American English, when he is teaching and take a fast-food chain like Taco Bell or MacDonald's in?
26	Keep up the good work! May God continue to bless your ISP!
27	It might be useful having a multilingual tutor available for international students. I think it would help with their assimilation into American culture.
33	Not yet.
36	No.
37	Keep encouraging international students and the ISP staff. [Employee Name] and his crew are doing an excellent job!